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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 38: Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources (A/60/65-E/2005/13)

1. **Ms. Tallawy** (Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (A/60/65-E/2005/13), said that General Assembly resolution 59/251 of December 2004 had reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the population of the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources, including land and water, and had expressed the hope that the issue would be dealt with in the framework of the final status negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

2. The report unequivocally demonstrated that the leading cause of the socio-economic harm to the Palestinian people remained the Israeli occupation. It focused on the socio-economic challenges facing the Palestinian population living under occupation, particularly owing to the demolition of homes and the destruction of crops. Important losses had been sustained in agricultural production owing to the prevention of access to cultivated land, while the imposition of restrictions on movements of goods and persons had exacerbated the humanitarian crisis in the occupied Palestinian territory due to its effects on employment, health and education.

3. The number of Israeli settlers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip had increased by six per cent in 2004. The Israeli Government had announced exceptional financial incentives to Israeli settlers in the West Bank; moreover, it was expected that the number of Israeli settlers in the occupied Syrian Golan would increase by 15,000 over the next three years.

4. General Assembly resolution ES-10/15 had acknowledged the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice that the construction of the barrier in the occupied Palestinian territory was contrary to international law. Nevertheless, Israel continued construction in the West Bank; when completed, the barrier would be an estimated 670 km long. The destruction of land and property to construct the barrier would be long-lasting and undermine the Palestinians' ability to recover should the political situation allow it.

5. The destruction of water and sanitation infrastructure had resulted in decreased average per capita availability of water, as well as contaminated drinking water. In addition, the nutritional status of the population had deteriorated, with particularly devastating results among children. The overall food consumption of Palestinian households had fallen by 25 to 30 per cent since September 2000. A quarter of Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip were unable to feed themselves adequately, even with food aid.

6. Children were the most affected by the conflict and displayed the typical signs of distress, particularly those living in refugee camps and in the poorer households in the Gaza Strip. Family life and health were also threatened by chronic anxiety, low self-esteem and feeling a loss of control: 30.8 per cent of children were reported to have been exposed to some type of violence. Additionally, disruptions in schooling in the West Bank in three consecutive academic years had led to a further deterioration in student achievement.

7. Geographic fragmentation had led to the deterioration of the general economy of the occupied Palestinian territory. Land scarcity, high population growth rates and a young population posed further challenges to socio-economic development. The unemployment rate, adjusted to include those who had given up looking for work, stood at 32.6 per cent in the third quarter of 2004. Every working individual supported 6.4 non-employed persons and poor households amounted to 58.1 per cent, or more than 2.2 million people, in the occupied Palestinian territory.

8. The situation described rendered the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 in the occupied territory very difficult. The sustainable option for creating better conditions and to ensure a life of dignity and rights for the Palestinian and Syrian civilians under occupation lay in ending the occupation of the Palestinian territory as well as the Syrian Golan. The need to accelerate the peace process to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Palestinian-Israeli and Syrian-Israeli conflicts was urgent.

9. **Mr. Sabbagh** (Syrian Arab Republic), noting that there was no mention of chemical waste disposal in the Syrian Golan Heights in the ESCWA report, asked whether the authorities of the occupying forces and Israeli factories continued their flawed practice of hazardous waste disposal and wondered what the environmental effects of such activities had been.

10. He was also interested in knowing how occupation of the Syrian Golan Heights had affected the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals for the population in that area.

11. **Mr. Hijazi** (Permanent Observer Mission for Palestine) pointed out that the report prepared by ESCWA had used the term "barrier" to describe the Wall being constructed by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. The International Court of Justice had found the Wall to be illegal and had called for its dismantlement in its advisory opinion of 9 July 2004. Since then, the General Assembly had adopted resolution ES-10/15, in which the term Wall had also been used. His delegation therefore found it puzzling that the report used a term other than that which had been agreed upon in relevant resolutions and legal documents, and urged ESCWA to use the agreed term in future reports. He was curious to know how the current figures given in the report compared to those of previous years. Such a comparison, using graphs and other means, would provide member States with a thorough and accurate view of the situation.

12. **Ms. Tallawy** (Executive Secretary, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)) said that ESCWA had followed up on previous requests for information relating to the disposal of chemical and nuclear waste in the occupied territories and particularly in the Golan Heights. The Commission had contacted several United Nations bodies under whose portfolio nuclear and chemical substances fell, but had not yet received responses. The Commission had received some information from NGOs, but in the absence of substantiated evidence, it could not officially present that information. The Commission would, however, remain vigilant and continue to pursue the matter. The next report would be more explicit regarding the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights. It was very difficult to attain the socio-economic objectives in any of the territories under existing conditions of occupation.

13. Referring to the query on comparative statistics raised by the Observer for Palestine, she said that the report had made such comparisons in some areas. Future reports prepared by the Commission would present graphs and statistical data with more extensive comparisons between years.

14. **Mr. Al-Ghanim** (Kuwait) referred to the use of technology in highlighting the suffering of the Palestinians, and called for the further use of such technology to better acquaint United Nations personnel with the actual situation on the ground.

15. **Mr. Sermoneta** (Israel) asked which United Nations bodies had been contacted by the Commission with regard to the issue of waste disposal, and whether copies of relevant correspondence could be made available to the Committee.

16. **Ms. Tallawy** (Executive Secretary, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)) said that the Commission was not the main source of information on Palestine, but relied on a number of agencies in the field that were in a better position to report on the situation. In the case of hazardous waste disposal, the Commission had written to the International Atomic Energy Agency, and although it was not common practice, her office would be willing to provide a copy of its letter to the Agency.

17. **Mr. Hijazi** (Observer for Palestine) said that Israel's illegal exploitation of the natural resources of the occupied territories left the rightful owners parched, walled in and forced to tolerate the pollution generated by the Israeli occupiers. Israel's exploitation and destruction of Palestinian natural resources contravened international law and the principle of permanent sovereignty of peoples over their natural resources.

18. The issue of resources remained of utmost relevance to the right to self-determination and prospects for peace and stability in the region. The international community must protect the scant resources of the Palestinian people and ensure compliance with resolutions and treaties on that subject.

19. The construction of the illegal separation wall of the West Bank would annex 46 per cent of the land there, confiscating Palestine's most valuable water resources, driving up water prices and drastically reducing the amount of water available to Palestinians.

Not only was Israel building and expanding illegal settlements in order to control the main aquifers in the occupied Palestinian territory, it also allowed settlers to dump untreated waste on Palestinian land. Chemicals and toxins produced by the Israeli settlements and factories furthermore devastated the land, agriculture and water resources in the area. When it had retreated from the Gaza Strip, Israel had not removed the hazardous debris of the former settlements, and it continued to transfer hazardous wastes into the West Bank.

20. As for agriculture, the Israeli occupiers had confiscated vast tracts of land and uprooted over 1 million trees, altering the topography and environment of Palestine, as documented by international organizations. Israeli practices had resulted in greater dependency on food aid and untold losses from the destruction of Palestinian homes and infrastructure. That situation must be brought to an end.

21. Negotiations were not enough; the Israelis were creating facts on the ground and pre-empting final status negotiations. The international community must bear its responsibilities by taking action to uphold international law and safeguard the Palestinian people's permanent sovereignty over its natural wealth and resources, together with its right to self-determination. Peace in the Middle East hinged on the establishment of an independent and viable Palestinian State and control over natural resources was an essential requirement for that viability.

22. **Mr. Datuk Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar** (Malaysia) deplored the deepening social and economic hardship being suffered by the Palestinian people and the Arab population of the occupied Syrian Golan, caused by the brutal measures imposed by the Israeli occupying power. Nearly every aspect of their lives had been affected by policies and practices which compromised development objectives and continued to affect living conditions.

23. Most recently, the separation wall had undermined the social and economic conditions of those living under occupation, and was a clear violation of international law. His delegation reiterated its call on Israel to comply with the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, and also with the relevant General Assembly resolution.

24. The Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan had suffered the diversion of their water supply, inadequate health-care provision, a discriminatory school curriculum, lack of markets for agricultural produce and unemployment. There had been reports that nuclear waste had been buried in insecure containers in the Golan. The possible leakage of depleted uranium could cause an ecological catastrophe and he called upon Israel to allow international monitoring of its nuclear programme.

25. He urged Israel not to exploit, cause loss or depletion of, or endanger the natural resources of the occupied territories. The only solution was to end the Israeli occupation, as Israel was not above the law and should fulfil its obligations under international law. Those countries claiming to promote human rights should help achieve those objectives.

26. **Mr. Al-Amri** (United Arab Emirates) said that, in spite of the recent Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank, the situation in the occupied territories had worsened. Palestinians were still being subjected to collective punishments, killings, acts of repression and restrictions on movements of people and goods into and out of the occupied Palestinian territory, which cut them off from the outside world and increased the rates of unemployment, poverty, and malnutrition among them.

27. Israel persisted in constructing the racist separation wall, expanding settlements, destroying agricultural infrastructure and forcing thousands of individuals off their land and out of their homes, in flagrant violation of international law. It denied the Palestinian people the right to compensation for losses arising from the construction of the separation wall and deprived the Arab population of the occupied Syrian Golan of the right to their natural resources.

28. Some 41.9 per cent of the West Bank was now occupied by Israeli settlements and thousands of Arab homes had been damaged or destroyed. In the occupied Syrian Golan, the Arab population had been stripped of virtually all their land and had extremely limited access to educational and employment opportunities. They had no health or social insurance coverage whatsoever.

29. His delegation reaffirmed its support for the Palestinian people and its right to establish an independent Palestinian State, with east Jerusalem as its capital. He urged the international community to compel Israel to implement all the international resolutions relevant to the Palestinian issue and the Middle East and to withdraw from all the occupied

Arab territories. Israel should cease all hostilities immediately and resume peace negotiations based on the Arab peace initiative and the road map. It should furthermore dismantle the separation wall and compensate the Arab population for their losses.

30. The international community and international financial institutions should assist the Palestinian National Authority and the Palestinian people in building economic and social institutions and in achieving a just and comprehensive settlement of the situation in the Middle East.

31. **Mr. Al-Mahraqi** (Bahrain) said that the report before the Committee clearly described the deterioration in the living conditions of Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan. The only way to improve the situation and guarantee development in the occupied territories was to end the Israeli occupation.

32. The Israeli occupation authorities continued to annex Arab land, expel the owners, expand settlement-building and deplete water sources, diverting them to the settlements. It completely ignored international condemnation of Israel's settlement policy, which hindered the growth and socio-economic development of Palestinian communities. Israel had signally failed to comply with its international obligations as an occupying power. It planned to increase the number of settlers in the occupied Syrian Golan by a further 15,000 in the coming three years, and to continue with the construction of the illegal Separation Wall, exacerbating the plight of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories in flagrant violation of international law. Its discriminatory policy with regard to the allocation of water in the occupied Syrian Golan, was designed to strip Syrian farmers of their livelihood and favour Israeli settlers.

33. His delegation reaffirmed its support for the efforts of the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights, including its right to establish an independent State on its national soil, with Jerusalem as its capital. To that end, he called for a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East based on the principle of land for peace and for the implementation of the relevant international resolutions, especially Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978).

34. **Mr. Elfarnawany** (Egypt) said that the report before the Committee documented the deterioration of the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan. It showed that the occupation hampered the implementation of national development plans by denying the affected populations the right to sovereignty over their resources and the enjoyment of their basic economic and social rights. The Palestinians were unable to mobilize national resources, attract foreign investment, or take advantage of global trade to become part of the global economy and develop the policies needed to create prosperity and employment opportunities.

35. The Palestinian economy had contracted sharply as a result of border closures and the construction of the separation wall. Workers could not find jobs, and the private sector was denied access to reliable supply lines and external markets. Restrictions on movements of goods and people exacerbated the humanitarian crisis and hampered the delivery of health and educational services. Salaries had slumped and unemployment had risen to over 40 per cent.

36. His delegation was concerned about the serious humanitarian, economic and social repercussions of Israeli practices on the affected communities, including the grave environmental threat posed by the burial of nuclear waste in the occupied Syrian Golan. Israel must be made to fulfil its obligations as an occupying power and to cease all practices which were contrary to international law and efforts to achieve a comprehensive peace.

37. The withdrawal from the Gaza Strip should be followed by swift and effective steps to end the cycle of violence and economic deterioration caused by the occupation. The Palestinian National Authority should be assisted in its work and the road map should be revived and fully implemented, with a view to securing an Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories, and establishing an independent Palestinian State, living side by side with Israel, in peace and security.

38. **Mr. Atiyanto** (Indonesia) said that the economic and social hardship of the Palestinians and the Syrian Golan had worsened under the Israeli occupation and there was little prospect that the situation would improve. The international community must put an end

to the uncertainty facing the Palestinian people in order to improve that people's social and economic prospects. In particular, efforts must be made to bring about a full Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories. Palestinian national unity and territorial integrity must be assured, together with the free movement of persons and goods within and to and from the territory. The inalienable right of the Palestinian people and the Arab population of the Golan to all their natural and economic resources, must furthermore be fully respected.

39. Indonesia fully supported the Palestinian people's struggle to achieve its inalienable rights and to live in a secure and prosperous independent homeland. That aim should be achieved through negotiations based on the road map, while the United Nations should continue its efforts to alleviate the plight of the Palestinians.

40. **Mr. Al Thani** (Qatar) said that the report under consideration showed that the Israelis were determined to defy the wishes of the international community and international law as expressed, inter alia, in Security Council resolutions. The Israeli occupation authorities were bent on consolidating their grip on the occupied territories, using all the means at their disposal to expand settlements, exploit natural resources and destroy the environment in the Arab-held areas, in an attempt to subjugate the Arab population and strip them of their economic rights and livelihood.

41. Israel's practice of demolishing people's homes, often with only a few minutes notice, and of destroying agricultural infrastructure and sanitation networks not only violated the fundamental rights of the affected populations, it also exacerbated the tensions in the occupied territories. The erosion of Arab land for the building of illegal settlements and the illegal separation wall worsened the living conditions of Palestinians by separating them from their land and depriving them of access to their places of work and thus of their livelihoods. The international community should take a clear and unequivocal position on the Israeli occupation with a view to ending the suffering of the Palestinian people and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan.

42. **Mr. Kanaan** (Observer for the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)) said that the Israeli occupation had had a disastrous impact on the social and economic situation in the occupied territories and would render the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 extremely difficult. The Israeli military occupation of Gaza would continue, as Israel would retain control over crossing points, borders, airspace and territorial waters, turning the Gaza Strip into a huge prison. Israel was exploiting the situation to build a Separation Wall, to consolidate and expand settlements in the West Bank, isolating East Jerusalem from the rest of the occupied territories, and thereby violating international law.

43. The occupation of the Syrian Golan had seriously disrupted the lives of Syrian families and communities and the OIC had repeatedly condemned Israel's refusal to abide by Security Council resolutions on annexation of land, settlement-building, confiscations, diversion of water resources and the imposition of Israeli nationality on Syrian citizens. The international community must demand an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Golan.

44. The Middle East peace process must be accelerated on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions and the principle of land for peace, and the agreements between the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Government of Israel must be honoured. It was also vital to preserve the territorial integrity of the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and to ensure free movement of persons and goods into and out of the Territory.

45. He called for the resumption of peace negotiations, the establishment of an independent and sovereign State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and an end to the occupation of the Syrian Golan.

46. **Mr. Abu Shaiba** (Kuwait) said that his Government was gravely concerned at the Israeli's inhuman practices against the Palestinian people, including the demolition of homes, severe mobility restrictions, closure policies, the use of arbitrary detention and extra-judicial killings. The expansion of settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory and the destruction of basic infrastructure had plunged millions of Palestinians into abject poverty, sharpening tensions and exacerbating the difficulties with which they had to contend. Contamination of the water supply and the construction of the Separation Wall harmed the economy, employment and the environment, placing women and children under considerable strain.

47. In the occupied Syrian Golan, the construction of new settlements and imposition of unjust taxes on the

Arab population seemed part of a strategy deliberately designed to force the original inhabitants out of the area and to consolidate the occupation.

48. His Government welcomed the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, which it saw as a step towards ending the Israeli occupation of all Arab territory and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, with Jerusalem as its capital. In that regard, Kuwait reaffirmed its support for the Arab peace initiative launched in Beirut in 2002. The deteriorating economic situation in the occupied Palestinian territory was a major obstacle to sustainable development. Israel must withdraw from all the occupied Arab territories to the line of 4 June 1967 and the Palestinian people must be allowed to exercise all its rights in accordance with the relevant international resolutions.

49. **Mr. Aghazadeh** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that Israel had ignored international calls to end the occupation and that the economic and social conditions for Palestinians were worsening. They were suffering high unemployment, greater dependency on food aid, and the destruction of their infrastructure.

50. Israel continued to contravene international law by pursuing the construction of the barriers. The land confiscation, seizure of water resources, environmental, economic and social impact of the barriers would have long-lasting consequences. His country looked forward to the establishment by the Secretary-General of a list of all barrier-related damage by the end of 2005.

51. The situation in education, health, agriculture and environment was worsening in the occupied territories. The inhabitants of the Golan were suffering a lack of health infrastructure, the imposition of taxes on their harvest, new settlements, discrimination, unemployment and job insecurity, and the overexploitation of water by settlers. The solution to the problems was to end the occupation of the Palestinian territory and the Golan.

52. **Mr. Ramadan** (Lebanon) said that the work of the Committee was primarily concerned with the realization of sustainable development, eradication of poverty and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals through all available legitimate means, the first of which was the utilization of natural resources in a sustainable fashion. The sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources was part and parcel of the mandate of the Committee. Lebanon supported the adoption of the draft resolution under the current agenda item because it was important to its commitment to sustainable development.

53. With regard to illegal settlements, the Economic and Social Council had adopted resolutions affirming that the Israeli settlements on Palestinian land, including East Jerusalem and the occupied Syrian Golan, were illegitimate and constituted an obstacle to economic and social development. The Israeli settlement policy would deprive Palestinians of vast areas of rich agricultural lands. The wall under construction would not only annex Palestinian territory, but would lead to the erosion and degradation of fertile soil and cut off most of the internal water resources that represented the major supply to the West Bank.

54. **Mr. Zoubi** (Jordan) said that the ESCWA report clearly illustrated that under Israeli occupation, efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals had suffered major setbacks. The development of illegal settlements, the construction of the wall and general conditions of occupation had exacerbated poverty and hunger, jeopardized schooling, and had increased the incidence of poverty in female-headed households. Standards of immunization coverage, the live birth rate, nutrition and food security and infrastructure had declined drastically in the areas under occupation. With regard to the Goal pertaining to environmental sustainability, hazardous and industrial waste and raw sewage discharges had polluted the environment, including the water supply, and had created short and long-term health risks.

55. Jordan's position on achieving and maintaining a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East was based on the international terms of reference of the peace process, the road map and the Arab Peace Initiative. He therefore called on Israel to cease all settlement activities in the occupied territories, stop the construction of the separation wall, return seized properties and pay compensation for damages incurred.

56. Jordan and its partners in peace had participated in both regional and international projects to benefit the region and alleviate the suffering of its people, but that participation must not be interpreted as an approval of practices that were counterproductive to the Millennium Development Goals in the occupied territories.

57. **The Chairman** invited the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to take the floor. As the Syrian representative was temporarily absent, he invited the representative of Israel to take the floor.

58. **Mr. Sermoneta** (Israel) said that his delegation had specifically asked to be the last speaker on the list.

59. **The Chairman** noted that the representative of Syria had returned to the room.

60. **Mr. Sabbagh** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation was awaiting the arrival of a new version of the text of its statement.

61. **Mr. Zoubi** (Jordan), speaking on a point of order, asked whether it was permissible under the rules of procedure for a delegation to specifically request to be the last speaker on the list.

62. **Ms. Tahtinen** (Assistant Secretary of the Committee) said that under rule 109 of the rules of procedure, the Chairman could call upon the speakers in the order in which they signified their desire to speak. It was also the practice in the General Assembly to accommodate the wishes of delegations on that point.

63. **Mr. Hivazi** (Permanent Observer for Palestine) said that it was also the practice of the General Assembly to move to the next speaker on the list if a particular delegation was not present to take the floor. He therefore suggested that, in the interest of proceeding with the work of the Committee, it would be preferable to call on the speaker that was in the next position on the list of speakers.

64. **Mr. Sermoneta** (Israel) said the report before the Committee had been discussed during the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council less than four months previously. It did not reflect the reality either then or now. Consequently, the Committee was discussing a political issue that was irrelevant to its agenda, through a repetitive exercise that ran counter to efforts to rationalize and improve the work of the General Assembly. Moreover the report only examined the impact of Israeli actions on the living conditions of Palestinians, without considering other important factors, such as those pertaining to the Palestinians themselves.

65. The report was one-sided and biased, which should come as no surprise as it had been composed by a United Nations body based in Beirut that did not even acknowledge Israel's existence in some of its publications. No effort had been made to corroborate its claims with other or more neutral sources. Israel therefore called on the Secretary-General and the head of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to ensure that better use was made of all available information when preparing future reports and to exercise caution in circulating reports that discredited the United Nations and affected its reputation for impartiality.

66. According to the 2005 Human Development Report, the Palestinian population received a disproportionate amount of aid in relation to their situation and needs (288.6 dollars per capita), compared to Sudan, where aid represented only 18.5 dollars per capita. Furthermore, the report ranked the Palestinian Authority seventh out of 103 developing countries in the human poverty index, on a par with Singapore and Cuba and higher than most States in the Middle East. The disproportion carried through into the favourable treatment received by Palestinians within the United Nations itself, where there were several bodies dedicated exclusively to the affairs of the Palestinian people, all of which served as mechanisms for anti-Israel propaganda.

67. The Palestinian Authority bore the principal responsibility for the daily well-being of the Palestinian people and should apply the rule of law. Corruption and incompetent leadership, wasteful spending of foreign aid and lack of internal stability were the major factors that affected the living conditions of the Palestinians. Above all, the Palestinian Authority needed to deal with the problem of terrorism. Israel was continuing efforts to improve the daily life of the Palestinians, through the disengagement plan and by facilitating the movement of goods and persons in and out of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. However, the persistence of suicide attacks illustrated the chasm between the declarations of the Palestinian leaders and their actions.

68. Lastly, Israel considered that the issue of shared natural resources should be resolved through direct bilateral negotiations taking into consideration all significant factors.

69. **Mr. Talib** (Syrian Arab Republic) expressed grave concern at the ongoing violations of the rights of the Palestinian people and of the Syrian citizens of the occupied Syrian Golan. Such violations consisted of

the annexation of land, blocking access to water sources and the harassment of Arab farmers attempting to make a living. Indeed, in 2004, the Syrian Government had had to buy in produce apples from Syrian farmers in the Golan who had been denied access to markets. However, the outlook for the farmers looked gloomy, particularly as Israel's practice of laying anti-personnel mines and dumping nuclear and chemical waste in the occupied Syrian Golan would damage the environment for some time to come.

70. The illegal Separation Wall was being erected in the occupied Palestinian territory in order to alter the demographic situation in the West Bank and East Jerusalem with a view to consolidating the colonialist presence there and preventing the establishment of a viable Palestinian State. It was further evidence of Israel's complete disregard for international law, as already illustrated by the decision of the Israel Knesset in 1981 to annex the occupied Syrian Golan and impose Israeli law and jurisdiction in the area.

71. His delegation again urged the international community to bring pressure to bear on Israel to end its aggressive practices in the occupied Syrian Golan and the occupied Palestinian territory, and to restore the legitimate and inalienable rights of the populations of those territories in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions. Israel must withdraw from all the occupied Arab territories to the line of 1967 and allow the Palestinian people to exercise all its rights in accordance with the relevant international resolutions, particularly Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

72. **Mr. Sermoneta** (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, referred to the matter of the purchase of apples and said it was unfortunate that a confidence-building initiative had been totally misconstrued. His delegation could only regret that an idea that was intended to show some sort of contact between the residents of the Golan and the Syrian Arab Republic had been interpreted in a way that was completely alien to its intention. He thanked the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic for the invaluable lesson on the respect for human rights, tolerance for other peoples and religions, and respect for the resolutions of the United Nations.

73. **Mr. Hijazi** (Palestine), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said he wished to answer some of the inaccurate and misleading allegations made by the representative of Israel. It was easy to avoid the central issue and distract attention from the information presented on the grave violations of international law, treaties, and resolutions of the United Nations. The fact remained that until the Palestinian people were allowed to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination with all that the right entailed, including permanent sovereignty over natural resources, the problem would continue. Furthermore, the depletion of the natural resources of the Palestinian people as well as their sovereignty over those resources resulted from a clear policy adopted by the State of Israel.

74. In his most recent report (A/60/271), the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967 had stated that the occupation of the occupied Palestinian territory continued to result in major violations of human rights and women suffered disproportionately from such violations.

75. **Mr. Sabbagh** (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that although the representative of Israel had failed to understand his statement about the Syrian farmers in the Golan, the report clearly showed the Israeli violations of their rights through economic and military actions which prevented them from selling their produce.

76. He could not understand how the representative of an occupying force could speak of the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, when he represented a Government which was proud of violating international law and those very resolutions, as well as resolutions of the Economic and Social Council. Israel should have explained why it would not implement those and other United Nations resolutions.

77. **Ms. Tallawy** (Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)), responding to the statement made by the representative of Israel, said that the report was neither one-sided nor biased, and was based on information provided by United Nations agencies. Also, what he referred to as a "United Nations agency based in Beirut" was one of five regional councils that were directly linked and were an essential part of the United Nations system.

78. The representative of Israel had suggested that ESCWA had a political agenda, which was untrue. It had been asked to prepare a report based on a specific mandate. The information it contained did not discredit the United Nations, and was based on data from the World Bank, ESCWA and 16 other United Nations agencies.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.